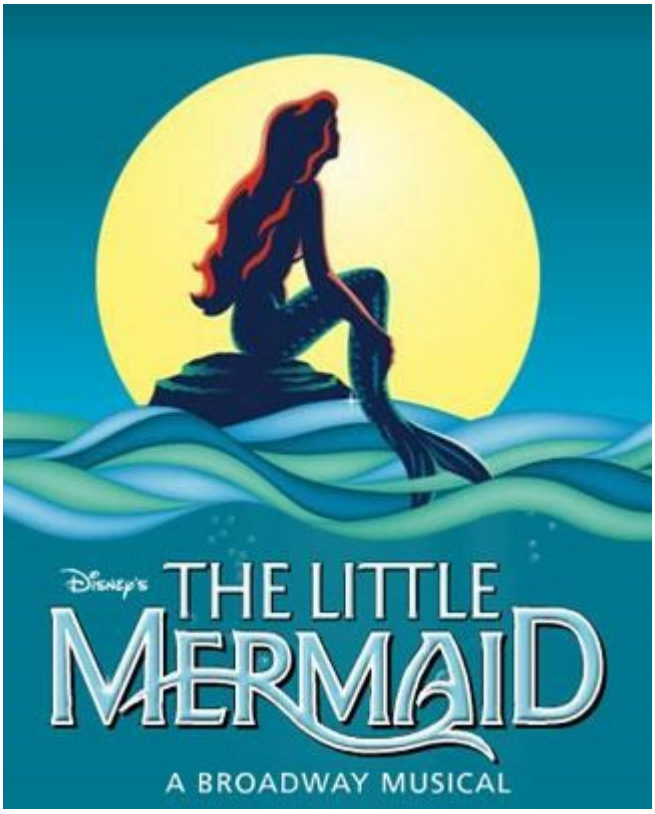


Disney's

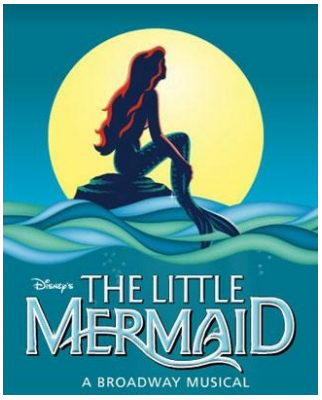
The Little Mermaid

A production by Variety Children's Theatre

October 24 - 26, 2014

Touhill Performing Arts Center

University of Missouri - St. Louis



Dear Educators,

Variety Children's Theatre is proud to present its sixth annual production, ***Disney's The Little Mermaid.*** Once again under the direction of Tony Award nominee Lara Teeter, this show boasts some of the city's greatest professional actors and designers. We all eagerly await the results of their craft— bringing the story of Ariel to life. Be sure that you and your students are there to experience the beauty of an opera house with a full orchestra, dazzling sets and brilliant costumes (including a trip under the sea).

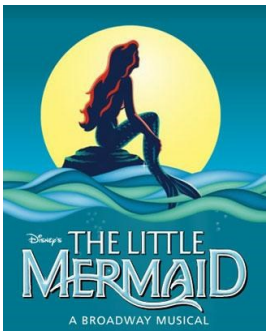
Musical theatre can enhance learning on so many levels. It builds an appreciation for the arts, brings to life a lesson on the parts of a story (i.e. characters, plot, conflict) and provides the perfect setting to learn a thing or two about fairy tales and why they are important windows into important facets of our lives.

Variety takes that learning one step further, however, presenting an inclusive cast where adult equity actors, talented adults from community theatre, and gifted theatrical children, work side-by-side with children who have a wide range of disabilities. The production is truly a lesson in acceptance, perseverance and the "I CAN" spirit that shines through all Variety programs.

In the near future, we will have *Disney's The Little Mermaid* study guide to help you incorporate the show into your curriculum and to help your students prepare for the show.

In that guide you will find a synopsis, character descriptions, and a list of activities that we hope will spark your students' interest in this unique and fantastic production of ***Disney's The Little Mermaid*** !
Sincerely,

Jan Albus
Executive Producer,
Variety Children's Theatre



Variety has been helping St. Louis area children with physical and intellectual disabilities reach their full potential for more than 80 years.

The mission of Variety the Children's Charity of St. Louis is to help local children with disabilities reach their full potential by providing services every time they need assistance.

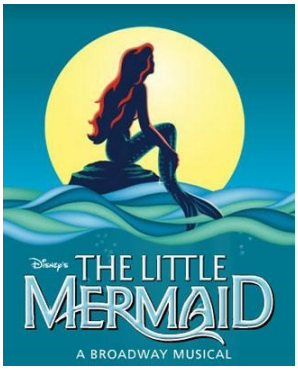
Variety the Children's Charity has been serving St. Louis area children with physical and developmental disabilities reach their full potential for more than 80 years. Variety helps from birth to age 21.

Variety focuses on five core areas to help our kids become independent and productive:

- Gifting **medical equipment** for mobility & independence.
- Funding unique **recreational programs,** including Adventure Camp and Family Outings**.**
- Raising **awareness and education** about children with disabilities, this includes Emerson Resource Center, Variety Children's Chorus, Variety Children's Theatre, and Champions for Children.
- Giving help for **therapy** including: speech, physical, occupational, equine and aqua.
- **Sunshine Coach Vans**, which transport children across the St. Louis area to doctor appointments, therapy sessions and special outings.

There are more than 100,000 school-age children with physical and developmental disabilities in our metro area. Variety and our 75 partner agencies serve 14,500 children. More children with disabilities – like Downs Syndrome, autism and cerebral palsy – are born each day and need help from our community to become productive, and independent.

Variety the Children's Charity of St. Louis started in 1932. We help every time a child needs assistance.



STATE CURRICULUM STANDARDS

COMMUNICATION ARTS

2. Reading and evaluating fiction, poetry and drama

5. Comprehending and evaluating the content and artistic aspects of oral and visual presentations (such as story-telling, debates, lectures, multi-media productions)

FINE ARTS

1. Process and techniques for the production, exhibition or performance of one or more of the visual or performed arts

3. The vocabulary to explain perceptions about and evaluations of works in dance, music, theater and visual arts

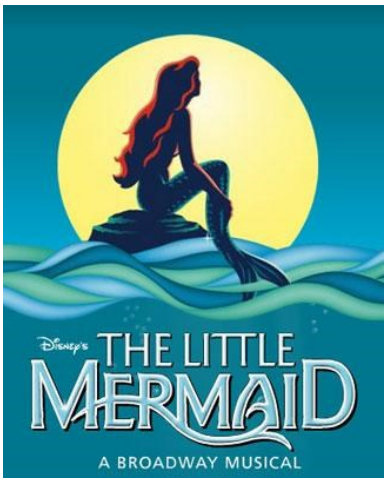
5. Visual and performing arts in historical and cultural contexts

SOCIAL STUDIES

5. The major elements of geographical study and analysis (such as location, place, movement, regions) and their relationships to changes in society and environment

6. Relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions

Refer to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education at http://dese.mo.gov/standards/ for more information.



THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Attending a live theatre performance is different from watching television or a movie. In a live performance, audience members play a role in the performance—the actors on stage are aware of the people talking or moving.

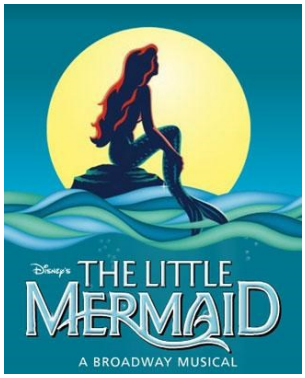
- **APPLAUSE:** Applaud after scenes, songs, acts and at the end of the show. Otherwise, try to keep quiet during the show.

- **ARRIVAL:** The performance starts right on time, so be sure to arrive with plenty of time to sort out seating arrangements and to visit the restroom. If you arrive late, you must wait patiently until there is a break in the act, performance, or symphony.

- **FOOD:** No food, drink or chewing gum is allowed in the theatre. Save snacks for intermission.

- **CELL PHONES:** Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices before the show or put them on silent. Make sure not to text or use a cell phone during the show. Texting and the light from your cell phone are very distracting to both the performers on stage and the audience members around you.

- **BELONGINGS:** Please check that you have all your belongings when you leave the theatre.



INCLUSION
Being a part of what everyone else is.
Being welcomed and embraced as a member who belongs.

Variety Children's Theatre uses musical theatre to introduce school-aged children to the concepts of inclusion and diversity. This program provides a unique and appealing opportunity for teachers to engage students in a lesson of "inclusion", "diversity", and "disability" as well as teach students how to reach goals despite obstacles and begin to include and accept others with differing abilities.

From tryouts to production, Variety Children's Theatre allows children to learn on-stage and backstage production skills from seasoned professionals. In *Disney's The Little Mermaid,* Ariel begins the play as a young mermaid who just doesn't fit in among her people. She longs to explore the surface world and learn all of its quirks and customs. Her innate curiosity and enthusiasm to try new things perfectly represent the spirit that Variety instills in children with disabilities. The inclusive setting offers an unmatched opportunity to develop important relationships, skills sets and appreciation of the overall workings of a live musical theatre program.

Variety Children's Theatre provides a host of opportunities, both for those who act and sing and for those who are more interested in production and backstage work. The goal is to inspire a life-long love for the theatre and create future opportunities for all participants.

30+

Variety kids will be involved in Little Mermaid both on and off

Variety child, Zach, served as Assistant to the Sound Designer for the 2012 production of ANNIE

Disney's THE LITTLE MERMAID

BROADWAY'S SPARKLING NEW MUSICAL

©Disney

Music by Alan Menken

Lyrics by Howard Ashman and Glenn Slater

Book by Doug Wright

Directed by Francesca Zambello

STUDY GUIDE

Prepared by Disney Theatrical Productions

Education Department

WELCOME TO *THE LITTLE MERMAID!*

"UP WHERE THEY WALK
UP WHERE THEY RUN
UP WHERE THEY STAY ALL DAY IN THE SUN
WANDERIN' FREE
WISH I COULD BE
PART OF THAT WORLD" **– Ariel, *"PART OF YOUR WORLD"***

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER?

In the Broadway production of *The Little Mermaid*, Ariel, the mermaid princess, wants to break out of her everyday existence and explore new worlds. For a mermaid, she longs for the impossible: to feel the sunshine on her face and dry land beneath her feet. As with the popular Disney animated film version based on the classic tale by Hans Christian Andersen, *The Little Mermaid* portrays the powerful desire for young people to be in charge of their own destiny — but still with the support and guidance from others who care.

Although *The Little Mermaid* takes place in a magical undersea world, the story is grounded in real-life feelings and desires. *The Little Mermaid* is a story about yearning: that feeling you get deep inside when you want something that's just out of reach. In *The Little Mermaid*, Ariel breaks away from her community and her family to follow her dreams. Everyone in her life – from her family to her friends – expects her to conform to a certain behavior. However, Ariel has to follow her heart. Prince Eric has a similar problem: he is expected to "settle down" and accept the responsibilities of the throne, but all he wants is a life of adventure at sea. Both Ariel and Prince Eric are outsiders, "fish out of water," because their dreams go against their society's norms.

Just as humanity is made up of diverse cultures and races, the sea holds thousands of creatures of every shape and size. Director Francesca Zambello felt it was important that the watery kingdom of *The Little Mermaid* be a reflection of our world today. Thus Zambello assembled a cast of performers, as she commented, "of all shapes and sizes and cultural backgrounds." "We've been blessed," she continued, "to find a wide range of incredibly talented actors and actresses to bring this show to its first incarnation."

"Everyone yearns at some point in their life," says Francesca Zambello, "to be something, to go somewhere, to discover something that's not part of what they are." Whether learning new things or meeting new people, students have many opportunities to challenge themselves every day. By watching Ariel fearlessly follow her dreams, young people may be inspired to pursue their own.

Sierra Boggess (Ariel)
photo by: Per Breiehagen

Score: a written or printed piece of music. Throughout the *The Little Mermaid* guide, look for definitions of words you may not know!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"I'LL TELL YOU A TALE OF THE BOTTOMLESS BLUE..."
– The Sailors, *"FATHOMS BELOW"*

Throughout the guide, you will see quotes from *The Little Mermaid*. Discuss how these quotes are connected to the exercises.

INFO SHEETS 4-17
Sharing these with your class or group BEFORE seeing the show will enrich your experience when you visit *The Little Mermaid*!

CLASS PROJECT: BRINGING *THE LITTLE MERMAID* TO LIFE! 18-36
Use these activities to bring *The Little Mermaid* to life in your classroom! **WHO?** (the characters), **WHAT?** (the plot), **WHERE?** (the setting), **WHEN?** (the story's time period), **WHY?** (theme and motivation)

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS 37
How does *The Little Mermaid* connect with your world?

RESOURCES 38
A list of texts, videos/DVDs, recordings and websites for further exploration into the world of *The Little Mermaid*!

Variation
Look for this shell for suggested variations on exercises and activities!

A NOTE ON LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- Each exercise includes a box with Learning Objectives. These objectives are adapted from National Standards and the New York City Blueprints for the Arts. See the Resources section for website links.

STORY SYNOPSIS

Our story begins as Prince Eric tirelessly searches the seas for the source of an enchanting voice, despite the protests of his guardian, Grimsby (“**Fathoms Below**”). Far beneath them, the crab Sebastian has prepared a concert for the merfolk to mark the singing debut of Ariel, King Triton’s youngest child (“**Daughters of Triton**”).

However, the mischievous Ariel is nowhere to be found. Ariel has been spying on humans with her fish friend Flounder (“**The World Above**”) and listening to her seagull friend Scuttle lecture about the objects she’s found (“**Human Stuff**”). In a deep, dark corner of the ocean, the sea witch Ursula and her lackey eels, Flotsam and Jetsam, bemoan their exile and plot to regain power from Triton using Ariel as bait (“**I Want the Good Times Back**”).

After Triton criticizes her for going up to the surface, Ariel retreats to her grotto where she stores her beloved collection of human objects (“Part of Your World”). Ariel swims to the surface to see the ship and admire Prince Eric on deck. When thunder rips through the sky and lightning strikes the ship (“**Storm at Sea**”), Eric falls overboard and begins to drown. Ariel saves the unconscious prince and brings him to shore (“**Part of Your World**” Reprise).

Back in Triton’s court, Ariel’s sisters have noticed her preoccupation and grill Flounder for the scoop (“She’s in Love”). On shore, Eric scans the waters for his savior (“**Her Voice**”). Thus Grimsby suggests a contest to find the owner of the mysterious voice. King Triton, furious about Ariel’s contact with a human, destroys all the precious objects in her grotto (“**The World Above**” Reprise). Feeling sorry for his new charge, Sebastian tries to cheer up Ariel with the wonders of the ocean (“**Under the Sea**”).

Unconvinced, Ariel leaves home and is greeted by Flotsam and Jetsam (“Sweet Child”), who escort her to the sea witch’s lair. Ursula opens up her octopus tentacles – and her dark powers – granting Ariel’s wish to be human, but at a high price: in exchange for her voice, Ariel has three days in human form to get Prince Eric to kiss her (“**Poor Unfortunate Souls**”).

Broadway Cast

Bemoan: to express distress or grief

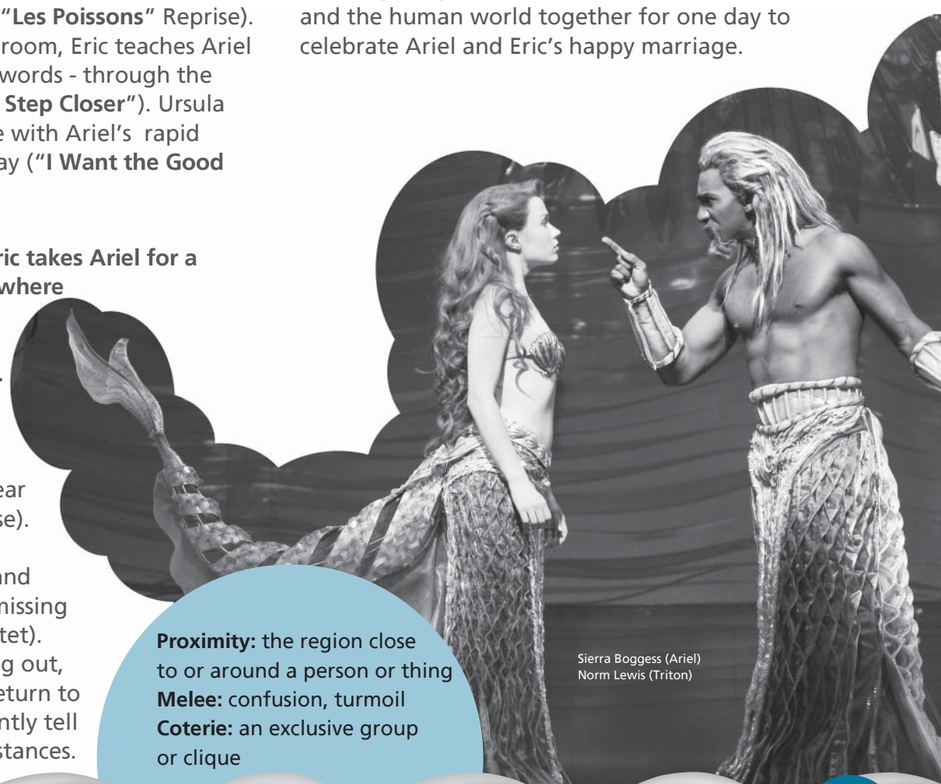
STORY SYNOPSIS (continued)

Discouraged without a voice or the ability to control her new legs, Ariel is quickly “reorientated” by Scuttle and the rest of the seagulls (“Positoovity”). While out for some exercise, Eric stumbles upon the helpless Ariel and carries her back to the palace. Overwhelmed by the splendor around her – and the proximity to the object of her affection – Ariel finds a melody for her thoughts (“**Beyond My Wildest Dreams**”).

Preparing a seafood spread in the kitchen, Chef Louis discovers Sebastian, a crustaceous intruder (“Les Poissons”). Ariel entertains Eric and Grimsby with her naïve antics then joins the **mêlée** as Louis and his **coterie** of chefs chase Sebastian around the dining room (“**Les Poissons**” Reprise). While walking her to her room, Eric teaches Ariel to communicate without words - through the language of dance (“**One Step Closer**”). Ursula sends her eels to interfere with Ariel’s rapid progress after only one day (“**I Want the Good Times Back**” Reprise).”

Late in the second day, Eric takes Ariel for a boat ride on the lagoon, where Sebastian leads the animals in a romantic serenade (“Kiss the Girl”). Flotsam and Jetsam spoil the mood by sending a jolt of electricity through the boat, blocking the near kiss (“**Sweet Child**” Reprise). Later, Sebastian laments the poor girl’s situation, and Triton worries about his missing daughter (“**If Only**” Quartet). With their options running out, Sebastian and Flounder return to Triton’s court and reluctantly tell the king of Ariel’s circumstances.

On the third day, Grimsby gathers princesses from across the land to sing for Prince Eric, but none possess the enchanting voice (“The Contest”). With the sun setting, Ariel desperately steps forward and… “dances” for Eric, who is smitten. But before they can kiss, Ursula storms the palace and takes Ariel back to the depths of the sea as a mermaid. When Triton appears and demands Ariel’s release, Ursula forces him to trade his power for his daughter’s life (“**Poor Unfortunate Souls**” Reprise). Ariel ultimately overcomes and destroys Ursula. Finally witnessing Ariel’s determination and Eric’s good nature, Triton uses his power to make her permanently human to be with Prince Eric (“**If Only**” Reprise). Triton unites the mer-world and the human world together for one day to celebrate Ariel and Eric’s happy marriage.



Sierra Boggess (Ariel)
Norm Lewis (Triton)

Proximity: the region close to or around a person or thing
Melee: confusion, turmoil
Coterie: an exclusive group or clique

MEET SOME OF THE CHARACTERS

Ariel: A mermaid on the verge of maturity: innocent, headstrong, spirited and overflowing with feelings that are fathoms deep. She dares to dream about being in a different world, the world on land above the sea.

King Triton: The son of Poseidon, King of the Undersea World, and father to Ariel and her sisters. Triton has a profound belief that the Human World is dangerous and should be shunned.

Prince Eric: Beneath his easy charm, handsome face and instinctive courage, Prince Eric is a reluctant ruler who'd happily trade his crown for a life of adventure on the sea.

Grimsby: Prince Eric's somewhat stuffy guardian. Without Grimsby's advice, Eric would be lost.

Sebastian: The court composer to King Triton, this crab becomes Ariel's unwilling protector.

Flounder: This fish is a faithful friend to Ariel. What Flounder lacks in courage, he makes up for in enthusiasm.

Scuttle: A seagull who fancies himself the ocean's greatest living expert on humans and their "stuff." Scuttle provides Ariel the latest information on the fascinating land-dwellers.

Flotsam and Jetsam: Ursula's lackeys, these two electric eels are slippery and cruel.

Ursula: Sorceress of the Sea, Ursula is Triton's sister. Banished forever for dabbling with "black magic," she plots to claim the throne of the Undersea World for herself.

Aquata, Andrina, Arista, Atina, Adella, Allana: Ariel's older sisters who sing at the celebrations their father King Triton throws for the undersea kingdom.

Chef Louis: The Royal Chef, whose specialty, and great love, is seafood.

Carlotta: Headmistress of the palace.

John Treacy Egan (Chef Louis)

Headstrong: determined to have one's own way

THEMES: WHAT IS A MYTH?

"I'M TELLING YA, LAD, WHEN KING TRITON IS MAD
HOW THE WAVES'LL BUCK, ROCK TO AND FRO" **– Pilot, *"FATHOMS BELOW"***

Myths are stories used to explain life's mysteries. Before the coming of science, civilizations interpreted the world around them through myths. Each culture has had its own myths to explain natural phenomena, provide inspiration, and teach lessons about ourselves and the world around us.

Human beings are always curious; we want to have the answers, even to impossible questions. Why does the sun come up every morning? How were stars created? What lies beneath the waves? Myths can be used to answer timeless questions and provide explanations for what is.

We are surrounded by mythological references from many cultures. Imagine waking up on a Thursday, ordering a book on Amazon.com about the planets Mars and Mercury, and later catching a show at the Apollo Theater in New York. All of the names of these places and things, even the day of the week, came from myths. Myths still hold great power for us because, like children's stories or folktales, they are simple but compelling narratives that can offer order and meaning to our otherwise confusing world.

Norm Lewis (Triton)

Phenomena: something that is impressive or extraordinary
Compelling: having a powerful and irresistible effect

THEMES: THE MAGIC AND MYSTERY OF THE SEA

Humans have always been in awe of the sea. We have always needed the sea – for navigation, trade and food – but we have always feared it. Traveling on the ocean is quite safe today, but in ancient times, a sudden storm or lack of wind could mean a death sentence. Because the sea was so vast yet so necessary, many myths and legends sprung up around its watery mysteries. From the ancient Biblical story of Jonah and the whale to the legends of the Bermuda Triangle, from stories such as *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* to movies such as "Jaws," the sea continues to flood our imaginations with hope and fear.

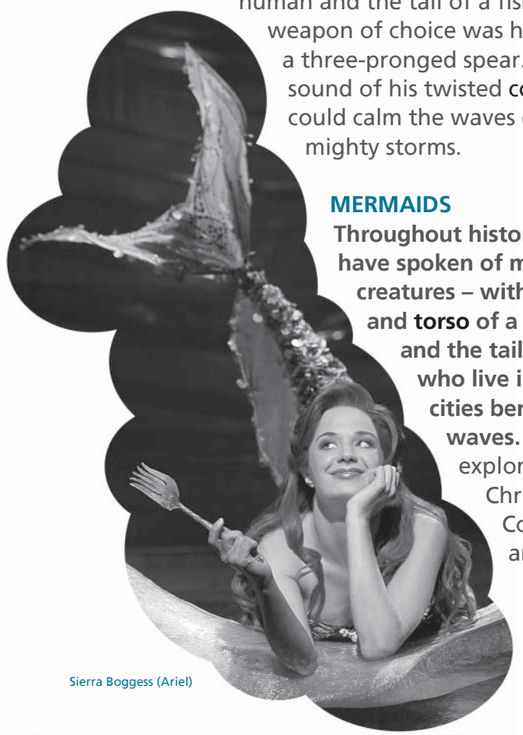
Below find information about the different myths of the sea you'll encounter in the *The Little Mermaid:*

TRITON

Triton was a Greek god of the sea. The son of Poseidon and Amphitrite, god and goddess of the ocean, Triton was usually shown with a powerful upper body of a human and the tail of a fish. Triton's weapon of choice was his trident, a three-pronged spear. The sound of his twisted conch shell could calm the waves or raise mighty storms.

MERMAIDS

Throughout history, sailors have spoken of mysterious creatures – with the head and torso of a human and the tail of a fish – who live in beautiful cities beneath the waves. Famous explorers like Christopher Columbus and Henry Hudson wrote about encounters with mermaids in their logs. Hudson wrote, "One of our company, looking overboard, saw a mermaid…her body as big as one of us; her skin very white and black hair hanging down behind…they saw her tail, like the tail of a porpoise…" (from *The New York Times*, November 4, 1888).

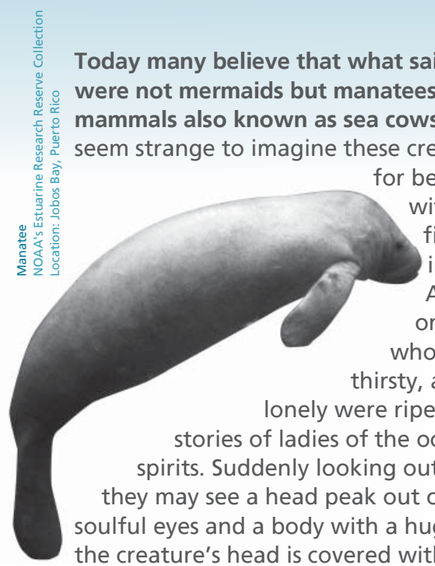


Sierra Boggess (Ariel)

Mermaids were known for their great beauty and their love of song. Sailors told of mermaids sunning themselves on rocks, while ships passing by would hear their sweet-sounding melodies. Their songs could make men fall in love, or drive them mad. Over the centuries, many countries and cultures have created their own mermaid myths:

- **Mami Wata, an African water spirit often shown as a mermaid, can bring good luck, or if crossed, may cause fatal drowning!**
- **The Aboriginal people of Australia told tales of the Yawkyawks, mermaids who would grow legs and walk among humans at night.**
- **The Native American Shawneo people believed that a half-man, half-fish with two tails had led their ancestors across the water from Asia to North America.**
- **Irish mermaids, called merrows, were able to live underwater by wearing magical caps.**

THEMES: THE MAGIC AND MYSTERY OF THE SEA (continued)



Manatee
NOAA's Estuarine Research Reserve Collection
Location: Jobos Bay, Puerto Rico

Today many believe that what sailors saw were not mermaids but manatees, huge marine mammals also known as sea cows. While it may seem strange to imagine these creatures mistaken for beautiful women with the tails of fish, put yourself in a sailor's shoes. At sea for months, or years, sailors who were hungry, thirsty, and certainly lonely were ripe for fantastic stories of ladies of the ocean and water spirits. Suddenly looking out at the ocean, they may see a head peak out of the water with soulful eyes and a body with a huge tail. Perhaps the creature's head is covered with seaweed, resembling long hair. Under these circumstances, it's understandable that the myth of the mermaid was born.

SEA MONSTERS

In *The Little Mermaid*, Ursula is a monster octopus and threatens Prince Eric's ship. For ancient sailors, the sea could be a deadly place. Myths of horrific sea monsters were formed to explain ship wrecks and disappearances.

Scylla and Charybdis – As described in Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*, these two monsters would haunt the Strait of Messina leading into Sicily, Italy. Scylla was a six-headed man-eating monster. Charybdis was a huge whirlpool that could swallow a ship whole. Sailors had a hard time navigating between these two sea monsters.

The Kraken – the horrible squid-like creature that hunted Captain Jack Sparrow in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies originated from an old sea legend of a huge tentacled monster that would rise out of the sea to bring ships down to the deep.

The Sirens – In *The Little Mermaid*, Prince Eric is enchanted by Ariel's beautiful singing voice, but in Greek mythology, the Sirens – half-birds, half-women – would use their seductive songs to distract sailors, causing them to run their ships against jagged rocks.

Tyler Maynard (Flotsam),
Sherie Rene Scott (Ursula),
Derrick Baskin (Jetsam)

Conch: these spiral shells are often used as horns
Torso: the human body excluding the head and limbs
Log: a ship captain's written record of a journey

REAL CREATURES OF THE DEEP!

"JUST LOOK AT THE WORLD AROUND YOU
RIGHT HERE ON THE OCEAN FLOOR
SUCH WONDERFUL THINGS SURROUND YOU
WHAT MORE IS YOU LOOKIN' FOR?" **– Sebastian, *"UNDER THE SEA"***

The Little Mermaid not only features mythical and fantastical beings like mermaids, dancing seagulls and singing crabs, but real creatures of the sea as well! The following are mentioned in the song "Under the Sea."

Newt: these brightly colored salamanders are amphibians, which means they can live both in water and on land.
Carp: this fish originated in Asia, but is now the most widely distributed freshwater fish in the world…to eat!
Plaice: the common name for three species of red and orange spotted flatfish that live in Alaska, America and Europe.
Bass: a name shared by many species of large game fish, including Australian bass, Chilean sea bass, and Largemouth bass.
Chub: a small grey & brown fish, found in freshwater as well as the ocean.
Fluke: another term for a flounder, this coastal-dwelling flatfish is known for its fighting abilities and its flavor…yum!
Ray: the common name for a class of flat-bodied ocean fish.
Ling: this large member of the Cod family is green and brown in color and feeds on all kinds of fish as well as sea stars and octopus.

THINK ABOUT IT
With your class or group, identify the names of different bodies of water from all over the world. Which of the fish above would call an ocean their home? A lake? A river?

Trout: the common name attributed to close to seventy species of freshwater fish, including the colorful Rainbow trout and Arizona's state fish, the Apache trout.
Blackfish: this ocean-dwelling fish, found from the Nova Scotia to South Carolina coasts, can grow up to 25 pounds!
Smelt: this family of small fish is common in the North American Great Lakes. Smelt eggs or "roe" are often used to decorate sushi.
Sprat: this small freshwater European fish of the herring family is known for its short and rounded head.
Blowfish: also called the pufferfish, balloonfish or bubblefish, this poisonous sea creature scares potential predators by filling its stomach with water and growing in size.
Electric eel: this elongated fish with a flattened head can generate strong electric shocks of up to 600 volts for both hunting and defense.
Hermit Crabs: these crustaceans search the ocean floor for empty seashells to call home; they often compete with other hermit crabs for the best shell!

Crustaceans: Live mostly in water and have a hard shell, a segmented body, and jointed appendages. Crustaceans include crabs, lobsters, shrimp, barnacles, and copepods.

Broadway Cast

GLOSSARY

"Whoa! Mermaid off the port bow!" **– Scuttle**

How is a ship like a theatre?

Below find the definitions of sailing terms you'll hear at *The Little Mermaid*, along with a glossary of theatre definitions:

SAILING TERMINOLOGY

Anchor: a heavy object, usually a shaped iron weight lowered by cable or chain to the bottom of a body of water to keep a boat from drifting.
Bow: the front of the ship.
Deck: a platform extending horizontally from one side of a ship to the other.
Fathom: the unit of length used to measure the depth of water, equal to 6 feet or 1.8288 meters.
Flotsam: the floating wreckage of a ship.
Jetsam: cargo thrown overboard to lighten a ship in danger.
Leeward: the direction away from the wind.
Port: the left-hand side of a ship.
Rigging: the arrangement of masts, spars, and sails on a sailing vessel.
Sail: a large piece of fabric designed to be hoisted on a sail boat to catch the wind and propel the boat.
Sea Shanty: as *The Little Mermaid* begins, we hear the sailors sing a sea shanty. Sailors created these rhythmic songs to lighten their often tedious work.
Starboard: the right-hand side of a ship.
Stern: the rear end of a ship, opposite to the stem, or prow.
Windward: the direction toward the wind.

THEATRE TERMINOLOGY

Backstage: any part of the stage not in the acting area during a performance.
Book/Libretto: "text" of a musical.
Cast: the group of actors and performers working on a show.
Deck: another term for the stage area.
Designers: (scenic, lighting, sound, costume, makeup) artists who create the physical environment for a play or musical.
Director: works with collaborators to interpret and oversee a theatrical production. The director is "captain of the ship" in terms of a show's artistic vision.
Intermission: the interval between acts that allows audience members to stretch their legs.
Producer: the driving force behind the show, assembles the artistic team, oversees all aspects beyond the stage.
Rehearsal: a time for the performers to learn their parts and their blocking.
Rigging: fixing lighting, sound and scenic devices to the theatre structure.
Wings: offstage areas right and left of the stage. This area is not seen by audience members in most theatres and is shielded by fabric or panels.

BEHIND THE SCENES: CREATING NEW WORLDS

"MY HEART'S AN OPEN BOOK
YOU'D SEE IT ALL AT ONCE
IF ONLY YOU WOULD LOOK"* – Ariel, *"IF ONLY (Quartet)"

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN (1805-1875): This Danish writer became known as the father of the modern fairy tale for the stories he wrote between 1835 and 1872. Along with "The Little Mermaid" (written in 1836), Andersen wrote such classic tales as "The Emperor's New Clothes," "The Ugly Duckling" and "The Princess and the Pea." Many of Andersen's stories explored the feeling of being different and the yearning for happiness. "The Little Mermaid" was first translated into English by H. P. Paull in 1872.

INSPIRATION!

"It was a piece that had always spoken to me," said Zambello. "I love all the Hans Christian Andersen stories. They're all incredibly beautiful and poetic and they have such strong visual sides to them. And of course I knew the Disney animated feature," she added. Zambello understood that the onstage version of the story had to have its own visual style and a life of its own.

Sierra Boggess (Ariel)

BEHIND THE SCENES: CREATING NEW WORLDS (continued)

PHYSICAL POETRY

When starting to imagine the visual world of *The Little Mermaid*, Thomas Schumacher, president of Disney Theatrical Productions, and Zambello turned to set designer George Tsypin. One of the trademarks in Tsypin's sets is the use of glass and fiberglass: a perfect way to call to mind the qualities of an undersea world. As Zambello relates, "The set feels like water without being water. It is shiny, it is translucent, it is transparent. It captures light and transmutes it and turns it into something else…."

HOW DO YOU MAKE A MERMAID?

According to Francesca Zambello, you make a mermaid by thinking like one: "The essence of Ariel is that she doesn't want to BE a mermaid! She wants to be something else. So understanding her hopefully meant we would find a way in to creating her costume." Just as George Tsypin's set suggests water without using actual water, the mermaid costumes, designed by Tatiana Noginova, are made of beautiful moving fabric that helps to create the illusion of moving through the ocean.

Broadway Cast

Translucent: Permitting light to pass through
Transmutes: To change from one nature to another

CREATING A THEATRICAL UNIVERSE

How is *The Little Mermaid* stage musical different from the animated film? Francesca Zambello reflects, "That's the challenge when you (adapt) an animated feature. You want to think, 'how can I make it, not better, but make its theatrical life unique?' Which is why you bring on board all your collaborators, your designers, choreographer, musicians, all working to answer this question: 'how will we make it unique for the stage?'" Or as she told *Applause* magazine (July-Sept. 2007), "The film is inspiration, but for a theatre piece you have to create something that is completely its own world. This is about a girl who wants to be something she's not. It's a universal 'I want.' That's the energy. We were given a great short story, and we have to create our own universe."

Sierra Boggess (Ariel)

THE LITTLE MERMAID CREATIVE TEAM:

- **Director –** Francesca Zambello
- **Choreography –** Stephen Mear
- **Scenic Design –** George Tsypin
- **Costume Design –** Tatiana Noginova
- **Lighting Design –** Natasha Katz

DISNEY AND MUSICAL THEATRE

"I think 'Mermaid' boasts one of the most tuneful, exuberant Broadway scores in recent memory. It only just happens that the score was written for an animated film."
- Doug Wright *(Denver Post,* July 22, 2007)

In his book *Hollywood Rhapsody*, Gary Marmostein writes that Disney's success was "founded on music almost as much as animation." Walt Disney understood the importance of music to storytelling. He wanted songs for his films that were not only memorable, but also helped to give his characters personality and move the story forward. When he created *Snow White*, Disney was determined that songs had to serve another purpose, to tell us something new about the character. "Really we should set a new pattern – a new way to use music – weave it into the story so somebody doesn't just burst into song," commented Disney (as quoted in *The Musical World of Walt Disney* by David Tietyen).

"It was Disney's objective that the songs would either offer exposition [or] develop characters and situations, rather than be musical interludes randomly injected into the film," writes Tietyen. This approach, of course, became the standard in musical theatre, reflected in Rodgers and Hammerstein's now classics such as *Oklahoma!* and *Carousel*. But Disney films had already set a high bar. Utilizing luminary musical theatre songwriters such as the Sherman Brothers, Elton John, Stephen Schwartz as well as Alan Menken and Howard Ashman, Disney animated features develop around a central tenet: the songs must help tell the story.

Broadway Cast

Exposition: explanation or narration in a story

THE MUSIC: PUTTING SONGS IN THE MERMAID'S MOUTH

"WHAT WOULD I GIVE
IF I COULD LIVE
OUTTA THESE WATERS?
WHAT WOULD I PAY
TO SPEND A DAY
WARM ON THE SAND?"
- Ariel , *"PART OF YOUR WORLD"*

The animated feature of *The Little Mermaid* is often recognized as the film that brought Broadway into modern animation. Composer Alan Menken and his late writing partner Howard Ashman introduced clever lyrics, colorful music and dynamic storytelling to an animated underwater world. In addition to the film's popular songs, Menken and lyricist Glenn Slater crafted new musical numbers specifically for the Broadway production.

Menken matched the music of *The Little Mermaid* with the magical aspects of the story: "The elements of classic fairy tale inform every aspect of *The Little Mermaid* stage adaptation, from the mer-world to the human world. It's a world built from fantasies and dreams, only using specific, real-world musical styles to illuminate the characters and emotions. For '**Part of Your World**' I used the repeated four note ascending figure as a water motif; constantly flowing and opening up into a broader emotional palette as the song develops" (from a 2007 interview). This approach provides an openness in the music – evoking the flow of water.

Motif: a recurring subject, theme, or idea in an artistic work

THE MUSIC: NEW SONGS FOR A NEW VOICE

"People probably don't realize that the film is only 82 minutes long," points out Francesca Zambello. When bringing *The Little Mermaid* to the stage, composer Alan Menken joined forces with lyricist Glenn Slater to add new songs to fill out the story. "Alan and Glenn have capitalized on what the film had before…but we wanted to tell more of the back stories," Zambello points out. "Where did Ursula come from? Why is Ursula like this? What drives her? So Alan and Glenn have written a number of new songs to join with the incredibly memorable songs that Alan created with Howard Ashman."

Writing for the movie or the stage version, Menken answers the same challenge: "I want to capture the heart of an innocent girl who's dreaming these big dreams that get her into trouble, but the goal is about – no pun intended – her finding her own legs, and her own voice" (from *Applause* magazine, Sept. 2007).

Broadway Cast

BRING *THE LITTLE MERMAID* TO LIFE!

Use these activities before and after you've seen *The Little Mermaid* to bring the show to life in your classroom!

A good way to assess any story is with the 5 W's:

- **WHO (character)**
  Who are the different characters?
- **WHAT (plot)**
  What do the characters do during the story?
- **WHERE (setting)**
  Where does the story take place?
- **WHEN (time)**
  When in history does the story take place? When during the day or the year?
- **WHY (theme, motivation)**
  Why do the characters act as they do?

NOTE TO TEACHERS: In the following pages, you'll find interactive activities designed to help your students think about *The Little Mermaid* using Theatre, Language Arts, Visual Arts, and Music skills.

Cody Hanford (Flounder)

A FRACTION OF A FISH!

"WE WHAT THE LAND FOLKS LOVE TO COOK
UNDER THE SEA WE OFF THE HOOK."* - Sebastian, *"UNDER THE SEA"

The Mer-people who live in the Underwater Kingdom of *The Little Mermaid* have features of both humans and fish. Mythology is full of creatures that are part human, part animal: the Minotaur had a human body and a bull's head; the Centaurs were half human, half horse; the Sphinx was part human, part lion. In theatre, actors often use the characteristics of animals to help deepen their performances; in a way, they become an animal – and combine it with their own humanity.

STEP ONE: Select an animal. You can choose one of the sea creatures on page 10 or look at the resources page (page 38) for websites of other forms of marine life.

STEP TWO: Students find a place around the classroom or on stage. On a vocal cue from the teacher, students transform themselves from humans to their animals. Simultaneously, the actors can explore the animal physically and vocally (through noises).

STEP THREE: After one transformation, begin again. This time, as he or she move around the acting space, the teacher can prompt the actors with a series of cues based on percentages of the human/animal equation. For example, the educator can sidecoach them with cues such as:

- **"Now you're 30% human, 70% creature"**
- **"You're 50% human, 50% creature"**
- **"How would you portray 90% human and only 10% creature?"**

STEP FOUR: Discuss how to portray a creature caught between two worlds. How do you portray a 50/50 split? How would you portray 99% human/1% animal? Which part of you is the 1%?

STEP FIVE: How do you portray a person who retains certain characteristics of animals? Have you ever noticed that some animals seem to behave like humans, and vice versa? For example, have you ever called someone hungry as a bear? Slow as a sloth? Slippery as an eel? How would you portray these characteristics on stage?

Sherie Rene Scott (Ursula)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- **THEATRE-ACTING: Students will recognize and create a variety of vivid characters in improvisation, scenework and plays**
- **THEATRE-ACTING: Students will be able to use physical transformation to create a visible characterization**
- **MATHEMATICS: Students will be able to demonstrate the concept of percent through problems related to actual situations**

DISCOVERING CHARACTERS THROUGH SOLILOQUY

Monologues and solos do not necessarily reveal a character's true feelings – sometimes they are used to persuade, or manipulate other characters in the scene (e.g., Marc Antony's eulogy of Caesar in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*). However, soliloquies are specific monologues or solos where a character, alone, conveys what he or she "wants" to the audience.

In the song "Part of Your World," Ariel provides the audience (or reader) with access to her inner thoughts. Her song is powerful, as audiences relate to her youthful curiosity and her desire to experience life above the sea.

Sierra Boggess (Ariel)

Up where they walk, up where they run
Up where they stay all day in the sun
Wanderin' free - wish I could be
Part of that world

What would I give if I could live out of these waters?
What would I pay to spend a day warm on the sand?
Betcha on land they understand
Bet they don't reprimand their daughters
Bright young women sick of swimmin'
Ready to stand

I'm ready to know what the people know
Ask 'em my questions and get some answers
What's a fire and why does it – what's the word?
Burn

When's it my turn?
Wouldn't I love, love to explore that shore up above?
Out of the sea
Wish I could be
Part of that world
- Ariel, "PART OF YOUR WORLD"

STEP ONE: Read the lyrics to "Part of Your World" out loud. Discuss how Ariel is feeling in this scene. Brainstorm a list of questions that this song evokes. What does she want?

STEP TWO: Ariel wishes to live out of her waters, her limitations. Write a brief monologue exploring something important that you want or thought you could never have. What are/were the obstacles in your way? What feelings are evoked? Why?

STEP THREE: Find a partner, and take turns reading aloud your monologues. Help your partner make his or her monologue clearer and more interesting.

STEP FOUR: After revising your monologue, perform it in front of the class, either reading it or performing from memory.

Solo: a song performed by one person.
Monologue: dramatic text spoken (performed) by one person.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS: Students will make oral presentations to the class
- THEATRE-ACTING: Students will be able to receive, respond to and incorporate directions
- THEATRE-ACTING: Students will be able to use their voice to express choices of character voice, emotional quality & intention
- THEATRE-PLAYWRITING/PLAYMAKING: Students will be able to create a monologue to reflect a character's inner thoughts at a particular moment

OBSTACLE COURSE

"I'LL SPRING THE TRAP!
AND GET THE GOOD TIMES BACK!" **– Ursula, *"I WANT THE GOOD TIMES BACK"***

On page 20, you just explored how a character's secret desires are often revealed to the audience through solos and monologues. Good storytelling often engages the audience as they watch characters struggle to achieve their goals against obstacles – challenges in the form of people, events or even personal issues – that stand in their way of happiness or fulfillment.

This process can be broken down into the following terms:

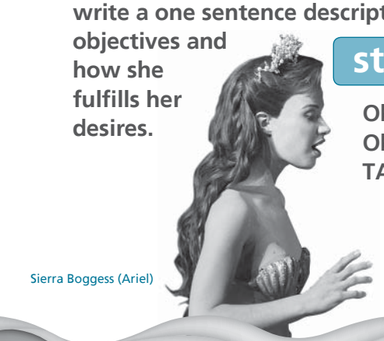
OBJECTIVE: What does a character want or desire?

OBSTACLE: What's in the character's way? What is preventing him or her from achieving his or her goal?

TACTIC: What does the character do to overcome obstacles in the way?

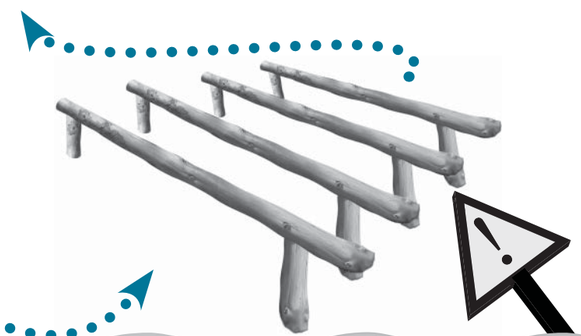
These are also the steps an actor will take when preparing a role. The actor is always thinking: "what does my character want in this scene? What tactics will I use to achieve this objective?"

What are the obstacles that Ariel faces on her journey? What tactics does she use to overcome those difficulties? On the obstacle course below, write a one sentence description of Ariel's objectives and how she fulfills her desires.


Sierra Boggess (Ariel)

Objective #3:
Obstacle #3:
TACTIC?

Objective #2:
Obstacle #2:
TACTIC?



Objective #1:
Obstacle #1:
TACTIC?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS: Students will create an organizational structure that balances the narrative aspects of a story
- ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS: Students will write compositions that address problems/solutions

IMPROVISATION: OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

"As long as you live under my reef, you'll obey my rules!" **– Triton**

Overcoming obstacles can be difficult, but this struggle is the essence of all storytelling and even of life itself. We love to see characters struggle against problems — not knowing whether they will succeed or not. By watching individuals battle against powerful obstacles and then overcome them, we gain courage to strive against the difficulties in our own lives.

Use improvisation to help the characters you portray from *The Little Mermaid* overcome the obstacles in each scene:

STEP ONE: Split up into smaller groups. For each scene listed below, choose who will play each character.

STEP TWO: In each scene below, start with a line of dialogue, then continue the scene, improvising in the voice and manner of the characters. Continue the scene until the obstacle is overcome.

CHARACTERS	Ariel, Triton
OPENING LINE	**Triton:** ***Ariel! I have to know! Did you save a human from drowning?***
OBJECTIVE	Triton wants Ariel to realize that humans are dangerous
OBSTACLE	Ariel won't listen

CHARACTERS	The Pilot, Grimsby, Prince Eric
OPENING LINE	**Pilot:** ***We ought to head back to shore, Your Majesty.***
OBJECTIVE	Prince Eric wants to find the origin of the mysterious voice
OBSTACLE	The Pilot and Grimsby want to return to land

CHARACTERS	Ursula, Flotsam, Jetsam
OPENING LINE	**Ursula:** ***King Triton's the only thing that stands in my way.***
OBJECTIVE	Ursula wants to take over the Undersea Kingdom
OBSTACLE	Her brother, King Triton, is in the way

STEP THREE: Discuss your improvisations and offer advice to the actors. Questions to consider:

- Did the actors stay in character?
- Did they hold their concentration, or were they distracted? Did the actors listen to each other?
- Could you always hear what the actors were saying?
- Did the dialogue help to tell the story?
- Did the actors seem to understand the character's obstacle? Did they portray them as overcoming it?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- **THEATRE: Students will recognize and create a variety of vivid characters in improvisation, scenework and plays**
- **THEATRE: Students will create appropriate physical gestures and facial expressions that serve a character**
- **THEATRE-ACTING: Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to commit to truthful acting and responding "in the moment" within imaginary circumstances**

DECISIVE MONOLOGUES

"JUST LOOK AT ME
AND YOU WILL SEE
SOMEONE BEYOND HER WILDEST DREAMS." **– Ariel,** ***"BEYOND MY WILDEST DREAMS"***

Like songs, monologues can reveal turning points in the story when decisions are made that that will affect the future. Improvise or write a brief monologue for one of the following story moments. Be sure to address the following:

- **What is your character's objective at this point in the story?**
- **What obstacles are in your character's way?**
- **What tactics will your character use to overcome his or her problems in this scene?**

CHARACTER: SEBASTIAN
How does Sebastian feel when Ariel doesn't show up for the concert?

CHARACTER: ARIEL
How does Ariel feel when Triton destroys her collection of "human stuff?"

CHARACTER: TRITON
How does Triton feel when Ariel leaves?

CHARACTER: SEBASTIAN
How does Sebastian feel when he must lie to the sea king to help Ariel?

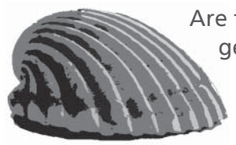
CHARACTER: ARIEL
How does Ariel feel when she signs her voice away to Ursula for a pair of legs?

CHARACTER: PRINCE ERIC
How does Prince Eric feel when he realizes Ariel cannot speak?

CHARACTER: URSULA
How does Ursula feel when Triton hands over his powers to her?

Variations

Create a dance or movement piece based on one of your monologues. Are there feelings you can get across to an audience through dance that you can't with a monologue or a solo song?



Sean Palmer (Prince Eric)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS: Students will create an organizational structure that balances the narrative aspects of a story**
- **THEATRE-PLAYWRITING/PLAYMAKING: Students will be able to create a monologue to reflect a character's inner thoughts at a particular moment**
- **THEATRE/ACTING: Students will be able to apply an understanding of specific character needs, obstacles, actions and relationships in activities, sharings and performances**

THE MAGIC OF THINGS

"WONDERFUL STUFF
THAT HUMAN STUFF
NONE OF IT FLUFF
NOT HUMAN STUFF!" – Scuttle and the Gulls, *"HUMAN STUFF"*

"Have you ever seen anything so wonderful in your entire life,"

Ariel cries out while holding up a fork. Although a fork may be an ordinary item to us, for Ariel, it is a beautiful work of art because it was created by humans. Like Ariel, we endow, or give emotional weight to certain objects based on their value to us. A ratty old doll might be trash to one person but a lifelong companion to another. Because of her fascination with humans and her desire to explore their world, Ariel endows human made objects with meaning that Triton and Sebastian cannot appreciate.

Stage Prop (or property): An object used on stage that could be handheld, furniture or other items conveying character and/or story (e.g., Grimsby's cane or walking stick provides a clue as to his age as well as a time when people used canes more frequently).

Here are two activities designed to explore the importance of props and how we endow them with emotional weight:

1. STAGE PROP TRANSFORMATION:

When Scuttle the Seagull refers to a pipe as a "snarfblatt," he incorrectly informs Ariel that is used to make music. Standing in a circle, pass around everyday objects and provide new names and functions for the items (i.e. a stapler might be called a "cruncher" used for cracking nuts). Anything goes, but students cannot repeat names or functions already described.

2. TIME CAPSULE:

Ariel says, "I just don't see how a world that makes such wonderful things…could be so bad." Create a list of objects from today's world you might place in a time capsule to show people from the future of our era's positive qualities.

Variations

Bring an object in to class that has great meaning to you, but might not mean as much to others. Explain why you have endowed the object with such importance.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS: Identifies and researches cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts**
- **THEATRE-PLAYMAKING: Demonstrate an understanding of the skills required to be a prop master**
- **THEATRE-ACTING: Students will be able to make expressive use of costumes and props in activities, sharings and performances**

CREATING WATER IN YOUR CLASSROOM!

"What we want to present is much more of a suggestive and imagistic and allegorical world. So everything is made out of glass and fiberglass and sculpture."
– Francesca Zambello (*Denver Post*, July 21, 2007)

Theatre artists are problem solvers. When confronted with the challenge of creating an underwater kingdom on stage, Francesca Zambello and the creators of *The Little Mermaid* were determined to develop new ways to suggest water without actually having water on stage.

Now it's your turn! If you knew you couldn't use real water, how would you show or suggest water in your classroom?

STEP ONE! Form smaller groups. Each group should choose a moment from *The Little Mermaid* involving water and discuss why water is significant to telling the story in that scene. List five reasons why or how water communicates the setting or theme.

STEP TWO! Consider the characteristics of water. How might you create the illusion of water in your classroom or other space? What are some of the characteristics of water? What might it look like? Sound like? How does ocean water behave differently from water in a standing pool?

STEP THREE! Now physically create a unique artistic interpretation of water! Use your imaginations and any materials at hand (see below list for suggestions). Each group presents to the other groups – see if they are able to guess your body of water and scene.

Suggested materials:

Paint	Fish netting
Cotton	Styrofoam
Plastic wrap	Glitter
Construction Paper	Fabrics

Sierra Boggess (Ariel)
Sean Palmer (Prince Eric)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS: Students will write in response to literature**
- **THEATRE: Students will investigate and analyze theatre design components**
- **THEATRE: Students will understand the function of scenery in creating an environment appropriate for the drama**

KEEPING THE OCEAN CLEAN

"Isn't this perfection, Grimsby? Out on the open sea, surrounded by nothing but water..." **– Prince Eric**

In *The Little Mermaid*, water is a means of trade, transportation, adventure and, especially for the mermaids, survival.

The ocean contains rich and vital ecosystems. Entire communities literally live off the bounty of the sea, and close to one billion people around the world depend on the ocean for nutrition (according to Ocean Blue, a nonprofit environmental group).

Yet the ocean is not an inexhaustible resource, and despite their importance to us, marine resources are being abused. Overfishing and pollution are in danger of destroying the precious balance of the world's ocean. The ocean is an important part of the "Circle of Life," as they say in *The Lion King*. Pollutants that are put down the drain, into the earth or let loose in the air eventually reach the open sea and can cause damage to marine life, sea birds and human beings. Wherever you live, even in a land-locked area, you depend on the sea. We are the **stewards** of our natural resources; it's up to us to protect the ocean and the creatures in it – after all, we are a part of their world.

Impact a "Part of Your World:"

- **Make a Difference:** volunteer your time or donate to an organization that works to protect ocean and coastal habitats.
- **Appreciate Your Ocean and Coasts:** enjoy the ocean, waterways and shorelines. But remember that these recreation areas are a fragile home to many plants and animals.
- **Respect Your Ocean and Coasts:** recycle, reduce and reuse. Keep trash and plastics off waterfronts and in trash cans.
- **Educate Yourself:** investigate how the ocean impacts your school or community from drainage issues and recycling to cafeteria fish sticks! Read about special ocean areas like national marine sanctuaries and share what you know.

Inexhaustible: that cannot be entirely consumed or used up
Steward: a guardian or protector

Broadway Cast

DON'T TRASH WHERE YOU SPLASH!

Specific Action Steps* - Here's how to help:

☑ Encourage students to adopt ecologically sustainable practices at home, school, in the general community, and along the coast and in the ocean.

☑ Partner with other schools in your watershed to develop collaborative conservation projects and information exchanges.

☑ Protect your ocean friends by putting trash in its place…not in the ocean. Help out in a beach clean-up…and always leave the environment in better condition than you found it.

☑ Clearly mark school and local storm water drains with suitable signs, such as "This drain leads to the ocean."

☑ Work with your local community to promote the use of reuseable bags in place of plastic bags that have the potential to become marine debris and injure marine and other wildlife.

Ocean terminology:

- **Conserve:** to prevent waste or loss of; to use or manage (natural resources) wisely; preserve; save.
- **Ecosystem:** an ecological community together with its environment, functioning as a unit (e.g. coral reef ecosystems).
- **Habitat:** the natural environment of an organism; place that is natural for the life and growth of an organism.
- **Marine Sanctuary:** a place that provides protection to part or all of the plants, creatures or cultural resources.
- **Ocean:** the vast body of salt water that covers almost three fourths of the Earth's surface.
- **Watershed:** the region draining into a river, river system, or other body of water.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- **CIVICS: Understands how participation in civic and political life can help citizens attain individual and public goals**
- **CIVICS: Understands contemporary issues that involve civic responsibilities**

*** Action steps courtesy of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). See Resources on page 38 for additional environmental websites.**

DESIGNING TWO WORLDS

IMAGINE THAT…YOU'RE A SET DESIGNER! It's your job to create the physical world of the play or musical – to show the audience WHERE the story takes place.

ASSIGNMENT: CREATE UNDERWATER & SURFACE ENVIRONMENTS FOR *THE LITTLE MERMAID*:

- **Triton's Palace**
- **Ursula's Lair**
- **Prince Eric's Dining Hall**

Divide the class into smaller groups, each designing one of the above worlds through use of color, scale, patterns, motif, shapes, etc. Explore which elements may be repeated in both the underwater and surface designs. For example, both worlds have sun images – one a fiery yellow while the other is a cool blue.

Where to begin?

1. ORIGINAL SOURCES:

THE BROADWAY SHOW: Consider the following description by Francesca Zambello, director of the Broadway production of *The Little Mermaid*, about the design concepts of the production:

"With my set and costume collaborators, George Tsypin and Tatiana Noginova, we found a world using light, glass and fiberglass, one full of reflections and sculptures that has all the elements of the earth yet is filtered through the point of view of the sea creatures. For example, it seemed only natural the sea creatures have their own versions of the sun, their own buildings, and their own architecture. Their way of dressing had to inform and incorporate a style of movement while never obscuring the human aspects of the actor. We never wanted it to become highly technical, but rather to keep a jewel-box-like quality to all visuals."

THE DISNEY FILM: Watch the 1989 Disney film, *The Little Mermaid*. Take notes as you watch.

- How do the animators portray the underwater world? The surface world?
- What distinguished the two worlds? How are they the same?
- Describe how the animators use color and texture to create these two worlds on film.

THE ORIGINAL STORY: Read "The Little Mermaid" by Hans Christian Andersen. Use passages such as the following to see how Andersen described the underwater world:

"In the deepest spot of all, stands the castle of the Sea King. Its walls are built of coral, and the long, gothic windows are of the clearest amber. The roof is formed of shells that open and close as the water flows over them. Their appearance is very beautiful, for in each lies a glittering pearl…"

DESIGNING TWO WORLDS (continued)

2. RESEARCH:

LIBRARY AND INTERNET: Research images from real life and mythology that might parallel these worlds. Gather at least five photos or depictions to help your work.

For more information visit these websites:

www.cousteau.org/en/ The website for the Cousteau Society contains photos and films of both the surface and underwater worlds.

www.flickr.com/groups/scubaphotos/ This hub of the photo pool site Flickr offers thousands of underwater images from around the world.

www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/pgallery/ This site shows the incredible diversity of life and habitats in the National Marine Sanctuaries.

3. CONNECTIONS:

SURFACE AND UNDERWATER: What are the connections between the surface world and the underwater kingdom? What are the connections between Triton's home and Ursula's lair? How can you use color, patterns, layout and sizing to create visual connections between the two set designs?

NOW, GET TO WORK! Find a cardboard box or shoebox to house your team's **diorama**/model. Other materials can include:

Crayons, markers, and colored pencils	Glue or tape
Scissors	Scrap pieces of fabric
Modeling clay	Real plants
Sea Coral	Sea Shells
Sand	Color photos of underwater scenes
Popsicle sticks	Fabrics

Each group should present its model to the class or group. Constructive criticism can be given: how might the team change its set design to better tell the story of *The Little Mermaid*?

VARIATIONS

- Act out a scene that might take place in your diorama.
- Create a soundscape for your environment. What songs or instrumental music convey the mood of your set? Play the music you choose when showing your diorama.

Diorama: a scene, often in miniature, reproduced in three dimensions by placing objects and figures in front of a painted background.

A MERMAID EXPEDITION

"THERE'S MERMAIDS OUT THERE
IN THE BOTTOMLESS BLUE" **– The Sailors, *"FATHOMS BELOW"***

Mermaids are part of our shared history. Archeologists have found ancient statues of mermaids dating back thousands of years. According to legend, as early as 5,000 B.C., the Babylonian god Oannes, described as half man, half fish, gave wisdom to mankind. Many cultures have stories and tales about mermaids or other underwater creatures. Throughout time, artists have used the mermaid as a symbol of beauty, freedom and mankind's interactions and connections with nature.

Sailors would search the seas for just a glimpse of a mermaid. Now it's your turn: instead of a ship, use the library or Internet resources to gather information and images about mermaids through the ages.

Jonathan Freeman (Grimsby)

STEP ONE: Break your class or group into three smaller groups. Each group will investigate a fascinating period of time for sea travel:

GROUP 1: ANCIENT GREECE

GROUP 2: 16TH CENTURY AFRICA

GROUP 3: 17TH – 20TH CENTURY EUROPE AND AMERICA

STEP TWO: Using the library, Internet, or museum resources, gather information, images, legends and lore about mermaids throughout the ages. Sources can include log entries, maps, legends and myths, photos, drawings, video or digital recordings.

STEP THREE: Using a bulletin board or a wall in your classroom, create a MERMAID TIMELINE, placing the data you have gathered in chronological order. Use your findings to discuss the myths of mermaids from cultures around the world. Find similarities and differences among the myths; is there a common thread that runs through all of the myths? How do the heroes, villains and themes of each myth reflect the culture that told it and the time period in which it was told?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- **THEATRE: Students will apply learning from other arts and disciplines to extend their understanding of theatre**
- **HISTORY: Students will understands the concept of arranging historical events into distinct periods**
- **HISTORY: Students will know how to diagram the temporal structure of events in literary narratives**

CONFRONTING PREJUDICE

"It's…about two worlds that don't like each other but come to embrace each other."
– Francesca Zambello (*Vanity Fair*, November 2007)

WHY DO WE FEAR OTHERS WE DON'T KNOW? HOW CAN WE GET ALONG BETTER? We see examples of prejudice and stereotyping in the opening scene of *The Little Mermaid* as Prince Eric and the sailors sing of King Triton and his mer-people without ever having met them.

Just a few scenes later, Triton rebukes his daughter about the sailors, "You could've been seen by one of those barbarians! One of those humans!"

In *The Little Mermaid*, the mer-folk and the humans feel prejudice towards each other. If you break the word "prejudice" down to its parts, you get "pre-judging" or judging before you have all the facts. Prejudice creates stereotypes, which are simplified and distorted views of a group. The only way to fight prejudice and stereotypes is through greater empathy, or identifying with the feelings and situation of another person. At the end of *The Little Mermaid*, the humans and mer-folk come together for a common goal: celebrating the bond created by Ariel and Prince Eric.

Eddie Korbich (Scuttle)

Explore the concepts of prejudice and tolerance:

- **Split your class or group into pairs. Each pair has three minutes to find out as much as they can about each other. Afterwards students introduce their partners to the rest of the group.**
  - o What do you have in common? What are your differences?
  - o How can empathy with another's view point help to bridge the gap between people? How can ignoring another's viewpoint lead to create prejudice?
- **Look at newspaper or Internet articles about how cultural misunderstandings can create prejudice.**
- **Discuss a time when you or a member of your family has ever been the victim of prejudice. Have you ever felt prejudice towards someone else?**
- **Create a tableau based on these concepts: PREJUDICE, HATRED, EMPATHY, & RESPECT.**

Tableau: a theatrical "frozen picture" in which actors are positioned to show a moment in time.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- **LANGUAGE ARTS: Students will use strategies to enhance listening comprehension (e.g., takes notes; organizes, summarizes, and paraphrases spoken ideas and details)**
- **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS: Students will make oral presentations to the class**
- **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS: Students will play a variety of roles in group discussions (e.g., active listener, discussion leader, facilitator)**

IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO

"DANCING IS A LANGUAGE
THAT IS FELT INSTEAD OF HEARD
YOU CAN WHISPER, SING OR SHOUT
WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A WORD" **– Prince Eric, *"ONE STEP CLOSER"***

Language is seen as both a barrier and a bridge in *The Little Mermaid*. Once Ariel loses her voice to Ursula, the evil Sea Witch, she must communicate with Prince Eric using only facial expressions and body movements. Later, Ariel's aquatic friends are "speechless" when trying to send a crucial message to Eric. The power of nonverbal communication transcends *The Little Mermaid*, into our everyday lives.

Have you ever been so happy that you just wanted to hug someone? Or so mad that you just wanted to turn your back to the world and slouch? These are all examples of nonverbal communication, or ways of sending and receiving messages by means other than words.

Pick one of the following excerpts from *The Little Mermaid* and try to convey the dialogue using gestures and body language. Also, fill in the stage directions – or the guidelines the playwright provides in order for actors to become the characters they're portraying – and have fun!

Here's a scene from *The Little Mermaid*. Note the italicized stage directions:

PRINCE ERIC (cont'd)
I'm sorry. You don't speak at all, do you? For a moment, I mistook you for somebody else.
(Frustrated, ARIEL stands and tries to pantomime the truth -- she's the one!)

PRINCE ERIC (cont'd)
What is it? You're hurt? No, no... You need help...?
(Suddenly, all the excitement -- and her new legs -- take a toll on ARIEL. She wobbles and falls, right into PRINCE ERIC's arms.)

PRINCE ERIC (cont'd)
A bit dizzy, aren't you? I've got just the remedy! A warm bath, and a hot meal! Come on now... you'll be fine. The palace isn't far.
(PRINCE ERIC lifts and carries the fragile ARIEL toward the Palace.)

Jonathan Freeman (Grimsby)
Sierra Boggess (Ariel)

IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO (continued)

STEP ONE: Split the class or group into pairs and read one of the following passages below:

PASSAGE 1
PRINCE ERIC: You should see the princesses that Grimsby drags to dinner. So prim, so boring. But you…why, you were practically swinging from the chandeliers!
ARIEL: _____

PRINCE ERIC: So — if you don't mind my asking — what was it? An accident, when you were small? Or maybe goblins stole your voice away in the middle of the night?
ARIEL: _____

PRINCE ERIC: I'm sorry, I didn't mean…. Who needs words anyway? A smile says just as much sometimes.
ARIEL: _____

PASSAGE 2
SEBASTIAN: Out of the frying pan, into the fire! The things I do for you, young lady! I know what I should do! I should march you right back home to your father.
ARIEL: _____

SEBASTIAN: …So you can be miserable the rest of your life.
ARIEL: _____

STEP TWO: Fill in stage directions for the lines provided. Remember, these suggestions should let the actor playing Ariel know how to react to Prince Eric or Sebastian.

STEP THREE: Using your stage directions, stage and rehearse the scene.

STEP FOUR: Once comfortable with the scene, try either character without speaking.

STEP FIVE: Present both pieces to the rest of the class. Encourage the class to compare the two pieces and provide the actors with feedback about their work.

Sierra Boggess (Ariel)
Sean Palmer (Eric)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- **THEATRE: Students will create appropriate physical gestures and facial expressions that serve a character**

THE ART OF PERSUASION

"DOWN HERE ALL THE FISH IS HAPPY
AS OFF THROUGH THE WAVES THEY ROLL
THE FISH ON THE LAND AIN'T HAPPY
THEY SAD 'CAUSE THEY IN THE BOWL" **– Sebastian, *"UNDER THE SEA"***

In "Under the Sea," Sebastian tries to convince Ariel that her home under the sea is better than the world she dreams of on land. To do this, he weaves what is known as a "list song." Sebastian sings a list of the beauties and interesting characters of the undersea world. Examples of list songs are "My Favorite Things" by Rodgers & Hammerstein, and "It's the End of the World As We Know It" by R.E.M. By creating a long and detailed list within a song, the songwriter "makes a case" for his or her point of view in a fun and engaging way.

Cicily Daniels, Tituss Burgess, Cathryn Basile

Imagine that a friend wants to leave your home town or city. It's your job to create your own list song and persuade him or her to stay!

STEP ONE: Imagine the positive! Create a list of the positive aspects of your hometown or neighborhood. Who are the fascinating people? What are some of the beautiful places of interest? What are the joyful events that occur there?

STEP TWO: Brainstorm the negative! Create a list of the negative aspects of the "outside world" – the places your friend wants to go. What are the dangers? What are the ugly sights? Remember, you're trying to persuade, so don't be afraid to exaggerate, and, like Sebastian in "Under the Sea," you can do so in a funny way!

STEP THREE: Create original lyrics for a song based on your lists. Don't forget, you are trying to persuade your friend that your hometown or city is the best possible place to be. This song can be to the tune of "Under the Sea" or you can create your own melody.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS: Students will write persuasive compositions that address causes and effects**
- **MUSIC: Students will use the elements of music for expressive effect**
- **MUSIC: Students will arrange simple pieces for voice or instruments**

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY?

At its core, a story is a character, in a setting and time period, trying to overcome obstacles to reach a goal. In other words, when the 5 Ws are put together, a story emerges. On page 36, find shells with CHARACTERS (**WHO?**), EVENTS (**WHAT HAPPENS?**), PLACES (**WHERE?**) and TIMES (**WHEN?**) from *The Little Mermaid*. It's up to you to discover the **HOW** and the **WHY**: how the characters overcome their obstacles and why they act as they do!

STEP ONE: Cut out each of the shells on the next page (page 36) or rewrite them on paper and place them in four bags labeled **WHO? WHAT? WHERE?** and **WHEN?**

STEP TWO: Split your class or group into smaller groups of five. Each group will choose five shells from the **WHO** bag and one shell from each of the other bags.

STEP THREE: Take 10 minutes to create a scene using those characters, events, places and times.

STEP FOUR: Perform your scene for your peers. Meet after the performance for "notes" from your teacher or other students. How can your performance be made more interesting?

photo by: T. Thayer

Turn the page...

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY?

WHO: ARIEL	WHO: ERIC	WHAT: A SHIP WRECK	WHAT: A WEDDING
WHO: SEBASTIAN	WHO: TRITON	WHAT: A SEA JOURNEY	WHAT: A SINGING CONTEST
WHO: URSULA	WHO: FLOTSAM	WHAT: A CONCERT	WHO: SCUTTLE
WHO: JETSAM	WHO: GRIMSBY	WHEN: AFTERNOON	WHERE: ERIC'S CASTLE
WHERE: TRITON'S PALACE	WHEN: MORNING	WHEN: MIDNIGHT	WHERE: ABOARD A SHIP
WHERE: URSULA'S LAIR	WHEN: THE 1800S	WHEN: TODAY	WHERE: ON THE WAVES

BEYOND THE STAGE

- **Create a Class Journal:** Throughout this study guide, you've explored what happens to the the characters during the story of *The Little Mermaid*. But what happened to you when you went to see the show? How were you changed? Create a class journal with snippets of conversation, opinions, photos, drawings about your trip to the show.
- **Write a Review:** After seeing *The Little Mermaid*, generate a review of the show. These can be in written form to be put in a journal, they can be in talk show form, or they can be used as the basis for a roundtable discussion. If you were going to tell a friend about the performance, explore the main story using these suggested points:

1. **Describe one of the actor's performances and discuss how that performance added to your enjoyment of the show.**
2. **Describe one of the costumes. How did it help to tell the story? What did the costume tell the audience about the character?**
3. **Describe one of the sets. How did it create the world of the story?**
4. **What point did the director or playwright try to make? What main idea were they trying to convey to the audience? Were they successful? Why or why not?**
5. **Describe the music. Was it memorable? What did the music show us about the characters? How did the music add to the mood? What did the songs add to the characters that the words could not?**

- **Explore Nonverbal Communication:** Discuss the different ways people communicate without using their voices. Even though gestures may be a key option, what other tactics are available in order for people to correspond with others? Over one day, make a list of each example you notice of people "speaking without words."
- **Consider "Other" Oceans:** For centuries, artists have been fascinated by the sea. Using the library and the Internet, or by visiting a local museum or art gallery, find images of artistic renderings of the ocean throughout the ages. Discuss how, and why, artists' interpretations of the ocean have changed over the years.

Broadway Cast

RESOURCES

TEXTS

Hans Christian Andersen: A Biography by R. Nisbit Bain (University Press of the Pacific, 2002)
Mermaids Most Amazing by Narelle Oliver (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2001)
OCEAN: The World's Last Wilderness Revealed by Robert Dinwiddie (DK Adult, 2006)
Song of the Sea: Myths, Tales and Folklore by Ann Spencer (Tundra Books, 2001)
The Annotated Hans Christian Andersen by Hans Christian Andersen, edited by Maria Tatar (WW Norton, 2007)
The Book of Mermaids by Patricia Saxton (Shenanigan Books, 2005)
The Musical World of Walt Disney by David Tietyen (Hal Leonard Corporation, 1990)

VIDEO/DVD

The Little Mermaid (2 Disc Platinum Edition) (Walt Disney Home Entertainment, 2006)
The Little Mermaid II: Return to the Sea (Walt Disney Video, 2000)
The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning (Walt Disney Home Entertainment, August, 2008)

RECORDINGS

Disney's The Little Mermaid: Original Broadway Cast Recording (©2008 Walt Disney Records)

PRODUCTION RELATED WEBSITES

www.disney.go.com/theatre/thelittlemermaid/index.html - The official web site for the Broadway production of *The Little Mermaid.*
www.HowDoesTheShowGoOn.com - Official website for Thomas Schumacher's book, providing an interactive guide to the inner workings of theater and what goes on behind the curtain.
www.surlalunefairytales.com/littlemermaid/index.html - An annotated version of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale.
www.strangescience.net/stsea2.htm - An extraordinarily detailed page, with information and images of sea monsters through the ages.

ADDITIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL WEBSITES

www.cleanoceanaction.org – An advocacy group dedicated to the preservation of the New York/ New Jersey coastline and ocean.
www.keepoceansclean.org – A kid-friendly site of the Oceans Awareness campaign which uses Ariel as a mascot!
www.malibufoundation.org – The Malibu Foundation for Environmental Education is a non-profit group "dedicated to a sustainable and healthy planet for all life by educating and motivating people into action."
www.nature.org – A world-wide conservation organization "working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people."
www.noaa.gov – Official site of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For more information on the Learning Objectives used throughout this guide:
- **National Standards**
  www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp
- **The New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts**
  schools.nyc.gov/offices/teachlearn/arts/oaspimages/theaterbpfull.pdf

Additional information about Disney Theatrical Productions can be found at: **www.disneyonbroadway.com**

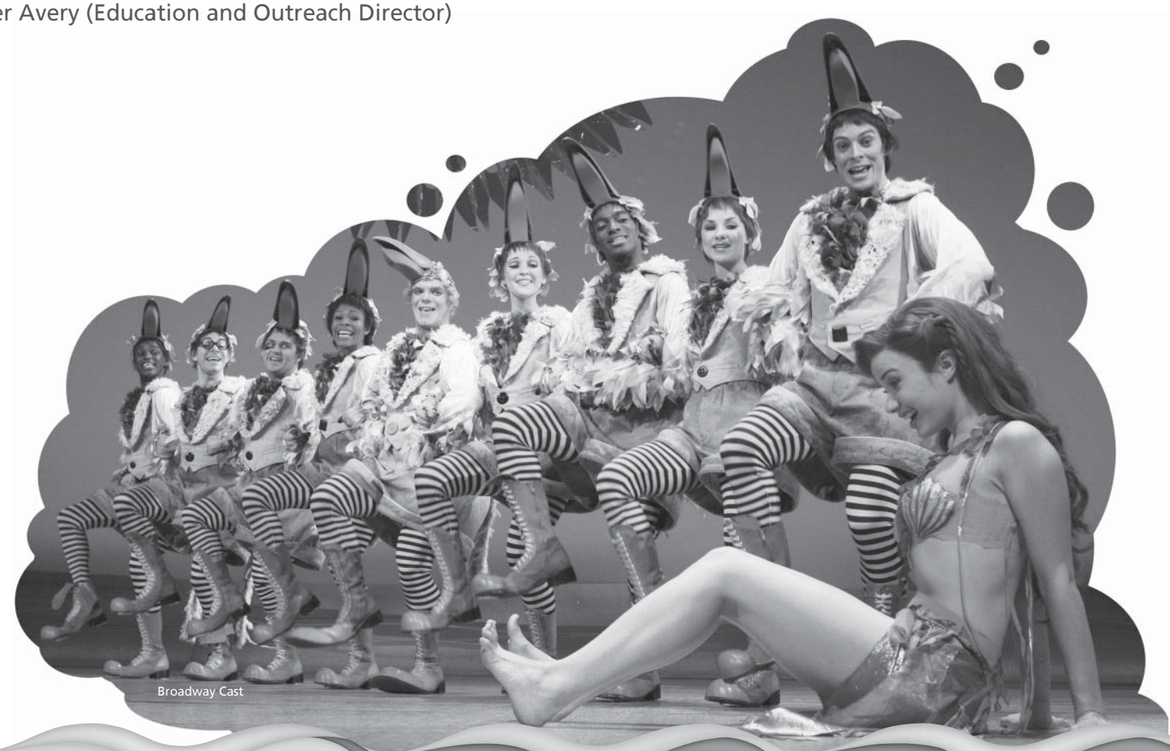
CREDITS

ABOUT DISNEY THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS:

DISNEY THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS (DTP), a division of Disney Theatrical Group, operates under the direction of Thomas Schumacher and is among the world's most successful commercial theatre enterprises. Reaching a global annual audience of more than 20 million people in over 40 countries, DTP produces and licenses Broadway musicals around the world including *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*, Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida*, *TARZAN*® and *Mary Poppins*, a co-production by Disney and Cameron Mackintosh. *The Little Mermaid*, debuted on Broadway in 2007. DTP also has a professional stage version of *Disney's High School Musical* that has toured across the country and around the world. Music Theatre International is set to begin licensing the stage adaptation of *Disney's High School Musical 2* in Fall 2008. In addition, DTP licenses musical titles for local schools and community productions through Musical Theatre International. Disney Theatrical Group also delivers live entertainment around the world through its partnership with Feld Entertainment, producer of *Disney on Ice* and *Disney Live!*, including *High School Musical: The Ice Tour* and *Playhouse Disney Live!*

STUDY GUIDE CREATED BY:

Peter Royston (Writer)
Tim Thayer (Designer)
Peter Avery (Education and Outreach Director)


Broadway Cast

To contact the Education Department: Disney Theatrical Productions:
ATTN: Education, 1450 Broadway, Suite 300, NY, NY 10018
Phone: 212-827-5400 Email: education@disneyonbroadway.com

Music credits:
p.2, p. 16, p. 20 "Part of Your World"; p.10, p.19, p. 36 "Under the Sea" Music by Alan Menken.
Lyrics by Howard Ashman ©1988 Wonderland Music Company (BMI)/Walt Disney Music Company (ASCAP).
p.3, p.7, p. 9, p. 30, p. 31 "Fathoms Below" Music by Alan Menken. Lyrics by Howard Ashman and Glenn Slater
©2007 Wonderland Music Company (BMI)/Walt Disney Music Company (ASCAP)/Punchbuggy Music (ASCAP).
p. 12 "If Only (Quartet)" ;p. 21 "I Want the Good Times Back"; p. 23 "Beyond My Wildest Dreams"
p. 24 "Human Stuff"; p. 32 "One Step Closer" Music by Alan Menken. Lyrics by Glenn Slater
©2007 Wonderland Music Company (BMI)/Walt Disney Music Company
(ASCAP)/Punchbuggy Music (ASCAP)/Menken Music (BMI).
All rights reserved. Lyrics reprinted by permission.

Broadway Cast

Photo credits:
All photos by Joan Marcus, unless otherwise noted.

Study Guide © 2008 Disney. All Rights Reserved.